



Introducing Chaucer (NLS Y7, Y8 & Y9)

KS3 > Poetry > Canterbury Tales

- How it works** This is a comprehensive resource for teaching Chaucer at Key Stage 3. There are a wide range of activities, from looking at how language has changed to studying the portraits and the tales themselves. It has worked well with able top set year 8 students, who are more than willing to have a go at translating Chaucer's words into modern English, especially when you tell them that it's A level work!
- Try this!** Give them the Miller's portrait and tell them he's the man of your dreams. Let them find out just what's so attractive about him ...
- Or this!** The *Chaucer Times* (page 33) makes an excellent research project which can be as high or low tech as you want. Try PowerPoint or use Teachit Publisher to create your final copy.
- Or this!** Use resource 9 from [Canterbury Tales Resource Pack \(2 – while reading\)](#) to help students when they come to write their own versions of the tales. Choose a range of people who might go on such a trip today and write their portraits ... but do it so you sound like Chaucer!
- Or this!** Feeling flash? [Chaucer – The Wife of Bath translation activity](#) would work well on an interactive whiteboard as a whole-class activity. There's an untranslated copy of the text listed as [Wife of Bath](#) in the KS5 Chaucer library.
- Or this!** Looking for an end of year exam? Try [A KS3 test](#) which links nicely with all this work on Chaucer.

Alison Smith

| Teaching Outline | Resources |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Lesson 1</i> <p>Discuss idea of English as a language – how old is it, where did it come from? Has it always been the same? Will it always be the same?</p> <p>Tell story of Prodigal son – explain how Bible is useful to see changes in English over the centuries. Group class in threes/fours. Issue <u>sets of cards</u> to groups – to sequence. Groups report back.</p> <p>Issue <u>A Thousand Years of English grid</u> to same groups to fill in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Lesson 2</i> <p>Explain a bit about Canterbury, Chaucer and pilgrimages. No such thing as a novel. Chaucer's "Big Idea". Brainstorm using whiteboard:</p> <div data-bbox="97 925 1216 1135" data-label="Diagram"> <pre> graph TD subgraph Whiteboard direction TB C[Canterbury] P[Pilgrim] S[St Thomas] CH[Chaucer] end </pre> </div> <p>By the end of the brainstorming session you should have covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where Canterbury is, why it became important, what happened to Thomas à Becket, what medieval pilgrimages were about, what they were like, pilgrimages today, good device for getting twenty nine disparate characters together in one place, Chaucer died before he could complete his grand plan. <p>Get students into pairs; provide them with a sheet of blank A4, scissors, glue stick. Each pair gets <u>one scrambled version</u> and <u>one original</u>. They need to use the original to reconstitute the <u>modern English version</u>.</p> <p><i>(Able students can be looking at, and starting, categories grid while the rest catch up)</i></p> <p>Plenary – read through <u>modern version</u> and check for understanding – where Southwark is, what the Tabard is etc.</p> <p>Read through <u>original version</u>!</p> | <p>R1.1</p> <p>R1.2</p> <p>R1.3</p> <p>R1.4</p> <p>R1.5</p> <p>R1.5</p> <p>R1.4</p> |

- *Lesson 3*

Issue character grid, and dictionaries. Allow enough time for each pair to have a reasonable go at coding all the pilgrims, then go through together. Findings can easily be presented as a bar graph – discuss how far this reflects contemporary society. Will be useful when class composes own.

R1.6

R1.7

R1.8

Groups of four brainstorm four *modern* characters

Feed back to whole class. Remove duplicates and agree on class list. Note down all of them for putting into the hat.

- *Lesson 4*

Show first twenty minute section of BBC Canterbury Tales video – identify key characters, use three stories for Speaking and Listening – discussion of how tale relates to teller. Put thirty modern characters into a hat – class now take “their” character.

- *Lesson 5*

Recap from last lesson. If it’s not already been discussed, then decide what situation is going to bring all these diverse characters together. Take “writing frame” from GP introduction “Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun/To telle yow al the condicioun/Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,/And whiche they weren, and of what degree,/And eek in what array that they were inne.” (it seems reasonable/That I should let you have a full description/Of each of them, their sort and condition,/At any rate as they appeared to me;/Tell who they were, their status and profession,/What they looked like, what kind of clothes they dressed in.) Put Middle English version on board/OHP, and get class to work out the plan for the description. They can then start drafting their own. Weaker, or more visually oriented students, can begin by sketching their “pilgrim.”

- *Lesson 6*

Look at two contrasting portraits – Prioress and Miller. Highlight in different colours description of: dress, status/profession, personality. Make students familiar with Middle English text – use it wherever possible. They may well use the modern version, but emphasise the original. I read each portrait three times to begin with – first with Middle English pronunciation, then the modern version, then the Middle English again, but pronounced using modern conventions. By this stage, they will have a good idea of what's going on! Make use of every opportunity to read the portraits in the original.

R1.9
R1.10

- *Lesson 7 – End of Unit*

This is a good point to start showing the three programmes. They are great fun and enjoyable in their own right; don't feel compelled to "teach" them. They're especially useful in providing pictures to go with the portraits. The tape can be paused briefly to point out who's who. In between excerpts of video, progress can be made with writing the class's own portraits.

Once the portrait writing is secure, the class can progress to the final activity, a comparison of the Miller's and Wife of Bath's Portraits. Use the writing frame, and make use of the OHP for modelling it.

R1.11

Year Seven Unit – Framework Objectives**Word level****Spelling strategies**

- draw on analogies to known words, roots, derivations, word families, morphology and familiar spelling patterns;
- use the quartiles of a dictionary and find words beyond the initial letter

Vocabulary

- use a dictionary and a thesaurus with speed and skill;
- work out the meaning of unknown words using context, etymology, morphology, compound patterns and other qualities such as onomatopoeia

Standard English and language variation

- identify specific ways sentence structure and punctuation are different in older texts.

Text level – Reading**Research and study skills**

- use appropriate reading strategies to extract particular information, e.g. *highlighting*, *scanning*;

Understanding the author's craft

- comment, using appropriate terminology on how writers convey setting, character and mood through word choice and sentence structure;
- distinguish between the attitudes and assumptions of characters and those of the author

Study of literary texts

- explore the notion of literary heritage and understand why some texts have been particularly influential or significant.

Write to analyse, review, comment

- write reflectively about a text, taking account of the needs of others who might read it.

Speaking and Listening**Group discussion & interaction**

- use exploratory, hypothetical and speculative talk as a way of researching ideas and expanding thinking;
- work together logically and methodically to solve problems, make deductions, share, test and evaluate ideas;

Listening

- listen for and recall the main points of a talk, reading or television programme, reflecting on what has been heard to ask searching questions, make comments or challenge the views expressed

History of English

999 (Old English)

Sōthlice his yldra sunu wæs on æcere; and hē cōm, and tha hē tham hūse genēalæhte, hē gehyrde thæne swēg and thæt wered. Tha clypode hē anne thēow, and acsode hine hwæt thæt wære. Tha cwæth hē, thin brothor com, and thin fæder ofsloh an fætt cealf, fortham the hē hine halne onfēng.

1380

Forsoth his eldere sone was in the feeld, and whanne he cam and neighede to the house, he herde a symfonye and a croude. And he clepide oon of the seruantis, and axide what thingis thes weren. And he seide to him, Thi brodir is comen, and thi fadir hath slayn a fat calf, for he resseyued him saf.

1611

Now his elder sonne was in the field, and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musicke & dauncing, and he called one of the seruants, and asked what these things meant. And he said vnto him, Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calfe, because he hath receiued him safe and sound.

1961

Now the elder son was in a field; and on his way back, as he approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what it meant. The servant told, "Your brother has come home, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has him back safe and sound.

A Thousand Years of English

| | 999 | 1380 | 1611 |
|------------|-----|------|------|
| Elder | | | |
| Field | | | |
| Approached | | | |
| Heard | | | |
| Called | | | |
| Brother | | | |
| Father | | | |

General Prologue – Introduction – Original Version

Bifil it in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At nyght was come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye
Of sundry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felaweship, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambers and the stables were wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon
That I was of hir felaweship anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take oure wey ther as I yow devise.

But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thynketh it accourdaunt to resoun
To telle yow alle the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree,
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.

The General Prologue

There came at nightfall to the hostelry
Some nine-and-twenty in a company,
Folk of all kinds,

And with a knight, then, I shall first begin.

their sort and condition,
At any rate as they appeared to me;
Tell who they were, their status and profession,
What they looked like, what kind of clothes they dressed in;

met in accidental
Companionship, for they were pilgrims all;
It was to Canterbury that they rode.

The bedrooms and the stables were good-sized,
The comforts offered us were of the best.

And by the time the sun had gone to rest
I'd talked with everyone, and soon became
One of their company, and promised them
To rise at dawn next day to take the road
For the journey I am telling you about.

But, before I go further with this tale,
And while I can, it seems reasonable
That I should let you have a full description
Of each of them,

It happened at this season, that one day
In Southwark at the Tabard where I stayed
Ready to set out on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury, and pay devout homage,

General Prologue – Introduction – Modern Version

It happened at this season, that one day
In Southwark at the Tabard where I stayed
Ready to set out on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury, and pay devout homage,
There came at nightfall to the hostelry
Some nine-and-twenty in a company,
Folk of all kinds, met in accidental
Companionship, for they were pilgrims all;
It was to Canterbury that they rode.
The bedrooms and the stables were good-sized,
The comforts offered us were of the best.
And by the time the sun had gone to rest
I'd talked with everyone, and soon became
One of their company, and promised them
To rise at dawn next day to take the road
For the journey I am telling you about.

But, before I go further with this tale,
And while I can, it seems reasonable
That I should let you have a full description
Of each of them, their sort and condition,
At any rate as they appeared to me;
Tell who they were, their status and profession,
What they looked like, what kind of clothes they dressed in;
And with a knight, then, I shall first begin.

Character Grid

| Rich | Aristocratic | Merchant | Craftsman | Church | Servant | Poor |
|------|--------------|----------|-----------|--------|---------|------|
| | | | | | | |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1 | Knight | |
| 2 | Squire | |
| 3 | Yeoman | |
| 4 | Prioress | |
| 5 | Nun | |
| 6 | Nun's Priests | |
| 7 | Monk | |
| 8 | Friar | |
| 9 | Merchant | |
| 10 | Scholar | |
| 11 | Man of Law | |
| 12 | Franklin (Landowner – a country gentleman) | |
| 13 | Haberdasher | |
| 14 | Carpenter | |
| 15 | Weaver | |

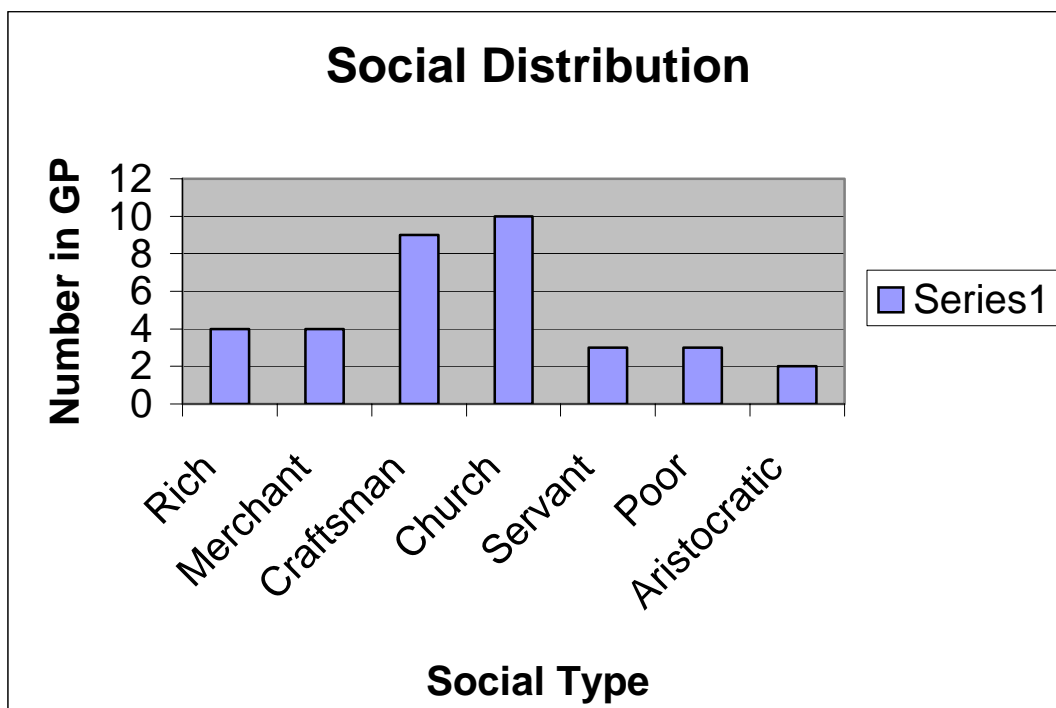
Character Grid

| Rich | Aristocratic | Merchant | Craftsman | Church | Servant | Poor |
|------|--------------|----------|-----------|--------|---------|------|
| | | | | | | |

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--|
| 16 | Dyer | |
| 17 | Tapestry Maker | |
| 18 | Cook | |
| 19 | Sea Captain | |
| 20 | Doctor | |
| 21 | Wife of Bath (a businesswoman) | |
| 22 | Parson | |
| 23 | Ploughman | |
| 24 | Reeve (Estate manager) | |
| 25 | Miller | |
| 26 | Pardoner | |
| 27 | Summoner | |
| 28 | Manciple (provision buyer) | |
| | | |

Geoffrey Chaucer The General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Rich | 4 |
| Merchant | 4 |
| Craftsman | 9 |
| Church | 10 |
| Servant | 3 |
| Poor | 3 |
| Aristocratic | 2 |



The Portrait of the Miller

The MILLERE was a stout carl for the nones;

The Miller was a burly fellow, actually,

Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.

With big muscles, and big of bone as well.

That proved wel, for over al ther he cam,

This was well seen – he overcame all others

At wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram.

At wrestling competitions he would always win the ram.

He was short sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre;

He was wide, thickset, didn't have much of a neck;

Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre,

There wasn't any door he couldn't heave off its hinges

Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.

Or break by running at it with his head.

His berd as any sowe or foxe was reed,

His beard was red as any fox or sow,

And therto brood, as though it were a spade.

And wide as well, as though it were a spade.

Upon the cop right of his nose he hade

On the top right of his nose he had

A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys,

A wart, on which stood a tuft of hairs

Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;

That were as red as the bristles of a sow's ears;

His nosethirles blake were and wyde.

His nostrils were black and wide.

A swerd and bokeler bar he by his side.

He carried a sword and buckler by his side

His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys,

And his mouth was as huge as a huge cauldron,

He was a janglere and a goliardeys,

He told dirty stories, and he was a loudmouth

And that was moost of sinne and harlotries.

Most of what he talked about was wicked and obscene.

Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries;

He was very good at stealing corn and taking three times what he was owed;

And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.

He had a golden thumb – by God he had!

A whit cote and a blew hood wered he.

He wore a white coat and a blue hood.

A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,

He played the bagpipes well,

And therewithal he broghte us out of towne.

And with its sound he brought us out of town.

The Portrait of the Wife of Bath

A good WIF was ther OF biside BATHE,

There was a business woman, from near Bath

But she was somdel deef, and that was scathe.

But, unfortunately she was a bit deaf.

Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt

She was such a skilled weaver

She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.

She was better than those from Ypres or Ghent.

In al the parisshe wif was ther noon

In the whole parish there wasn't anyone

That to the offryng before hire sholde goon;

Who dared go in front of her to the almsgiving in church;

And if ther dide, certeyn so wroth was she

And if anyone did, then she was so very angry

That she was out of alle charitee.

That she wasn't nice at all.

Her coverchiefs ful fine weren of ground;

Her head-coverings were of the finest cloth

I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound

I dare swear they weighed ten pounds

That on a Sondag weren upon hir heed.

The ones she wore on Sundays on her head.

Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,

Her stockings were of finest scarlet red

Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe.

Very tightly laced, and with new, supple shoes.

Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.

Her face was bold and handsome, florid too.

She was a worthy woman al hir lyve:

She had been a respectable woman all her life:

Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde five,

And married five times in church,

Withouten oother compaignye in youthe –

That's not counting other loves she'd had when young

But thereof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe.

But we don't need to speak about them just now.

And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;

And she'd been to Jerusalem three times

She hadde passed many a straunge strem;

Crossing many a foreign river;

She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.

She knew all about travelling – and straying

Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.

It's true to say she was gap-toothed!

Upon an amblere esily she sat,

She sat comfortably on an ambling horse

Ywimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat

With a good wimple, and on top of that a hat

As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;

Which was as wide as a shield or an archery target;

A foot-mantel about hir hipes large,

She had a riding skirt around her enormous hips

And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.

And a sharp pair of spurs on her feet.

In felaweship wel koude she laughe and carpe.

In company, how she could laugh and joke!

Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,

She knew of all of the cures for love

For she koude of that art the olde daunce.

Because she knew everything about that old game.

Title

A Comparison of Chaucer's Portraits of the Miller and The Wife of Bath in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales

❖ *Introduction*

Write a short paragraph explaining what The General Prologue is, and what you are going to look at...

Chaucer begins the Canterbury Tales...

There are different types of people; for example..

I am going to look at...

❖ *First paragraph*

Explore how the Miller is described and what the description tells you about his personality.

The Miller is described as being...

He has a beard... His appearance is...

Don't forget to mention the things he does, as well – and say what they tell you about his personality.

❖ *Second paragraph*

Explore how the Wife of Bath is described and what the description tells you about her personality.

The Wife of Bath is described as ...

She wears...

Don't forget to mention the things she does, as well – and say what they tell you about her personality.

❖ *Conclusion*

Sum up what you have found out. Explain your overall impressions of the two pilgrims. Explain which one you would most like to travel with.

The two portraits are very different. The Wife's portrait says a lot about... In contrast, the Miller's portrait... I would most like to travel with.....This is because.....

| Teaching Outline | Resource |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <p>The Nun's Priest's Tale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the <u>story</u> and show the video – recap what happens with the class. Small groups or pairs – issue <u>narrative sequencing sheets</u> and get them to do them, either on the sheets or in their books. Pair Work – An Interview with Chanticleer. Get class into pairs, A and B. A is to be an interviewer on a news programme, B is to be Chanticleer. They should work together on questions and replies, and then present them to the class. They should make sure there are questions on the following subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life in the farmyard (including his wives) His dreams and what he thinks about them How he managed to get tricked What he thinks he's learned. Planning and writing a story with a moral – use <u>worksheet</u> to start process. Then talk about how to plan the narrative, by answering questions such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What sticky end does the animal come to? Does it escape, like Chanticleer, or not? Try to make this happen because of its weakness (cf Chanticleer's vanity) Does the animal get any warning of the disaster? Is there a "near miss" first? Who will be the storyteller? The animal? You? Another character? These narratives need not necessarily be fully written – they could be told from notes as a Speaking and Listening assignment. Some blank flow chart sheets could be handy at this point, especially for weaker students. | <p>R2.1 R2.2</p> <p>R2.3</p> |

The Nun's Priest's Tale

Once upon a time, long ago, a poor widow lived in a small cottage. She had lost her husband, since when she had lived a very patient, simple life, for she had very little money. She made do as best she could for herself and her three daughters, with three hefty sows, three cows, and a sheep called Molly.

She had a yard outside the cottage enclosed by a fence and surrounded by a ditch. In the yard she kept a cockerel called Chanticleer. He seemed magnificent. He was the greatest of all at crowing; his voice was jollier than the organ playing in church and more regular than the abbey clock. His comb was a fine red, his beak was as black as jet, his feathers were bright flaming gold, and his legs and toes a bright azure blue, with brilliant lily-white nails.

He was the master of seven hens, the loveliest of whom was gracious Lady Pertelote. Such a joy it was to hear them sing together, for in those days all animals could speak and sing.

Now it so happened one day, just before dawn, when Chanticleer and Pertelote and all the hens were sitting on their perches, Chanticleer began to groan and reel, so that Pertelote was quite afraid.

"What's the matter, my dear? My, what a noise to make."

"Madam," he replied, "please excuse me but I have had such a frightful dream that my heart is still pounding. I dreamt I saw, in our yard, roaming up and down, a kind of beast, a kind of hound, which tried to seize and kill me. His coat was yellowy red, except for the tips of his ears and tail which were dark black. He had a pointed nose and glowing bright eyes. No wonder I was groaning, it was enough to make you die with fright!"

“Shame on you!” said Lady Pertelote, “You frightful coward! I cannot love you any more! We women want husbands who are tough and dependable, not men reduced to terror by a dream. Anybody with any sense knows that dreams mean nothing at all. You probably ate too much before you went to sleep. All you need is a laxative. It’s no good you saying that this town doesn’t have a chemist’s shop. I shall prescribe you a cure from the herbs in our yard. First you’ll have to eat worms for a day or two, then I shall find you some centaury, some fumitory, and some caper-spurge with just a touch of hellebore, and after that there’s laurel, blackthorn berry and ground-ivy. That’ll soon put an end to your dreams!”

“Madam, thank you for all your advice, but I must disagree with you. Dreams often have a meaning. I once heard a story, and I believe it to be true, about two friends who set off on pilgrimage together, but when they reached the town which was their destination, there was such a crowd of people, that they could not find anywhere to stay together. So, very unwillingly, they separated. The first could only find a cowshed in an innkeeper’s yard to stay in, but the second was more lucky.

“Now, long before daylight, the second man had a dream, in which his friend appeared to him and shouted. ‘Help! Help! I shall be murdered tonight unless you come and help me. Come quickly!’ The terrified dreamer woke up, but as soon as he realised it was a dream, he paid no attention to it and went back to sleep. Soon afterwards he had the same dream again, but again he paid no attention to it. The third time the dream was different, for this time his friend said, ‘Look, I have been killed, look at my deep and bleeding wounds. You must get up, go to the west gate, and there you will see a cart loaded up with dung. Stop that cart, and hidden in the dung you will find my body. It was for my money they killed me.’

“The dreamer still didn’t believe any of this, but he went as early as he could to where his friend had spent the night. There was no sign of him. At that moment the innkeeper arrived and said, ‘Sir, your friend has gone, he left the town a little after dawn.’ The man began to feel suspicious and, drawn by the memory of the dream, off he

went to the west gate. There he found a dung-cart, and the man, amazed, began to shout, 'My friend's been murdered! Fetch the sheriff! Help! My friend is killed!' people rushed out to see what the matter was, pushed the cart off its wheels, and in the middle of the dung, found the murdered man. The town officers seized the carter and tortured both him and the innkeeper. Both of them confessed to the crime. Then they took the two criminals and hanged them.

"So, you see, Madam Pertelote, murder will always be found out, thank God, and these stories, and many others I can think of, should teach us not to be careless about dreams. It seems to me that my dream means that something terrible will happen soon and your laxative will do me no good. But madam, let's stop all this talk of disaster. For when I see the beauty of your face and the scarlet loveliness of your eyes, then all thoughts of terror are over. I defy all dreams and visions!"

Now it was day and with a cock-a-doodle-do he flew down to the ground – he had seen some corn. He was afraid no more, but strode up and down, proud as a prince, his face as grim as a lion's.

All this happened in the month of March. On the third day of May following, a sly old fox, who had been lurking round the yard for three long years, sneaked into the bed of cabbages and waited there until the middle of the day, waiting for his chance to strike. Lady Pertelote was leisurely taking a bath in the dust, surrounded by ladies basking in the sun. Chanticleer was singing merrily. And then it happened that he cast his eye towards the cabbages and saw the fox there lying low. He cried out with a start and turned to fly in terror. The crafty old fox quickly said, "Sir, wait, why do you run away? I am your friend. Surely you do not think I am waiting here to do you any harm! No sir, truly, all I wanted was to sit here and hear you sing. Such a voice you have sir, and what musical knowledge! I knew your mother. She came to my house once. But when it comes to singing – there was never anybody I would rather hear than your dear father. What pains he took – the eyes tight shut in concentration, oh – and that slender neck stretched out, that delicate beak. Oh sir, could you not, just for me, try to imitate your father?"

Poor Chanticleer was completely fooled by this flattery. He stood high upon his toes, stretched out his neck, and then with his eyes tight shut, began to sing.

Sir Fox then leapt to the attack, grabbed him by the neck, flung him over his back and carried him into the woods.

Then Dame Pertelote, and all the hens, when they saw the capture of Chanticleer set up such a yelling and shrieking that the widow and her daughters heard it, and rushing to the door saw the fox making off with Chanticleer stretched flat upon his back.

“Look,” they cried, “the fox, the fox!”

Off they chased after him, with Coll the dog and everybody in hot pursuit.

Now Chanticleer, though scared out of his wits, managed to blurt out, “Sir fox, if I were you, I would turn round to these fools and shout, ‘You country bumpkins, you, now I’ve reached the wood, you can’t catch me. I’ll eat the cockerel at my leisure.’”

The fox replied, “Good idea, it shall be done.” But as he opened his mouth to speak, the nimble bird flew high into the treetops.

When the fox saw where Chanticleer had got to, he cried! “Chanticleer, I’m sorry if I have done you any harm, I didn’t mean to grab you so hard. I hope I didn’t frighten you. Come down, sir, and I’ll explain the meaning of it all.”

“No sir,” replied the cockerel. “I’m not such a dunce as all that. You won’t fool me again.”

So the priest ended his tale, urging his listeners to learn what truth they could from his story.



The Nun's Priest's Tale

Fox comes into the yard. Asks to hear Chanticleer sing, and grabs him by the neck

Chanticleer carried off to woods – household set off in

Chanticleer's story about a dream warning which came true – the murder

Poor widow, 3 daughters, Chanticleer and Pertelote

Chanticleer gets the fox to speak, and in so doing escapes

Chanticleer's dream of the "red beast" – Pertelote says it's his digestion



A Story With a Moral



| | |
|-----------|------------------|
| A Boaster | A Selfish Person |
| A Bully | A Trickster |
| A Meanie | A Hypocrite |

Choose one of these characters to feature in your story – cross out all the rest. Now match them with an ordinary animal.

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| A Cat | A Dog |
| A Horse | A Budgie |
| A Pig | A Hamster |
| A Hen | A Cow |
| A Snake | A Frog |
| A Rabbit | A Sheep |

Again, cross out what you don't want.

Jot down a few notes here about the setting – where your story will take place:

Jot down a few notes here about the family and friends of your character. They may all be other animals, or there may be some humans as well:

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Year Nine Unit – Framework Objectives**Sentence level****Standard English and language variation**

- investigate ways English has changed over time and identify current trends of language change, e.g. *word meanings*.

Word level**Vocabulary**

- recognise layers of meaning in the writer's choice of words, e.g. connotation, implied meaning, different types or multiple meanings;

Text level – Reading**Reading for meaning**

- compare the presentation of ideas, values or emotions in related or contrasting texts;

Study of literary texts

- extend their understanding of literary heritage by relating major writers to their historical context, and explaining their appeal over time;

Text level – Writing**Inform, explain, describe**

- make telling use of descriptive detail, e.g. eye-witness accounts, sports reports, travel writing;

Analyse, review, comment

- cite specific and relevant textual evidence to justify critical judgements about texts.

Speaking and Listening**Drama**

- use a range of drama techniques, including work in role, to explore issues, ideas and meanings e.g. *by playing out hypotheses, by changing perspectives*;

The Pardoner's Tale

My story is of three drunkards who, long before the morning service bell, were sitting in an inn having a drink. As they sat there, they heard the hand bell being rung as a coffin was taken down the street to its grave. One of the drunkards called to a boy who worked in the inn. "Come here, boy. Now run and find out whose body it is they are carrying to the grave. Go on, be quick about it, and make sure you get the name right."

"Please, sir," replied the boy, "there's no need to go. I was told the name two hours before you came here. The man was a friend of yours, and last night he was here at the inn, lying on a bench dead drunk. That man, that thief, name of Death went up to him and speared him through the heart so that he never even stirred. Please, sir, that Death has killed one thousand people in a plague. You'd better be on the lookout for him sir. My mum says I've got to keep my eyes open for him and not speak to him."

The innkeeper joined in and said, "The boy's right, sir." There's a village not a mile from here, and a large village at that, where he has killed every man, woman and child. He's killed so many people around here that I reckon he must live near here."

One of the drunkards got irritated with all this talk and said, "This Death cannot possibly be so very fierce. By God, I am going to search every street for him. Hey mates, look here, the three of us, let's stick together and find and kill this traitor Death who has done away with our friend."

So the three men swore to live and die together and in their drunken rage started off towards the village which the boy and the landlord had spoken about.

They had gone only about half a mile when they met a very poor old man who greeted them very politely and gently. "Good morning gentlemen. God be with you."

The loudest-mouthed of the drunkards answered him, "You silly old fool, get out of the way. Why are you so old; isn't it about time you were dead?"

The old man replied, "Sir, I am so old because no one I have met on my travels, and I have been as far as India, would swap his youth for my age. Not even Death will take my life!" So I wander the earth asking, 'When will these bones be laid to rest?' See how I wither, look at my flesh and blood and skin! But you were wrong to speak so roughly to me just now, for if one day you get to be old you would not like the young to speak to you so. Now if you will excuse me sirs, I shall be on my way."

"Hold your horses old man," said the drunkard, "you don't get off so lightly. I heard you mention a certain traitor, name of Death, who kills all the young men around here. I think you are his spy, and unless you tell us where he is hiding, you'll pay for it! I think you're in league with Death, trying to slay us young people."

"And, now, sirs," the old man said, "if you want to meet Death, turn up that crooked path there towards that wood and you will find him waiting. He won't hide, just because you're boasting that you can kill him. You'll find him by that oak tree – see? May God protect you and forgive you."

As soon as the three men heard this, they rushed off, but all they found when they reached the tree was a pile of golden coins on the ground. They were all so thrilled with this discovery that they completely forgot the real reason for being there. The wickedest of them said, "Brothers, it is obvious that Fortune has given us this treasure so that we can live in luxury and pleasure. Come let's spend it as we want to.

"Our only problem is how to get the gold away from here. If we walk back into town in broad daylight, people will think we are a gang of robbers and hang us by the neck. No, we must take the treasure back at night and keep it out of sight. I suggest that we draw lots, and he who draws the longest straw shall run back to the town to fetch us bread and wine to last us through the day. Then when night comes we'll all three carry it away as we have planned."

So they drew lots and it fell upon the youngest, so he set off towards the town straight away.

As soon as he had gone, the wicked man sat down and said to the other, "Now friend, look at things this way. You know our mate has gone to get supplies for us, and there

lies a pile of gold to be divided equally amongst us three. Now, if I could manage it, wouldn't it be better if it could be divided just between two?"

"But how could that be?" asked the other. "He knows the gold is here. What could we tell him? What are we to do?"

"Will you keep this secret?" said the wicked man. "If so, I will tell you what we shall do."

"I promise not to betray you," said the other.

"Well," said the wicked man, "we are two, and twice as powerful as he is. When he comes back, get up and pretend to wrestle with him in fun, and as you attack, I will stick my dagger in his back then you draw yours and do the same. Then we can share the money, just between the two of us."

So they agreed to kill the third and youngest of their group.

The youngest, on his way to town, kept thinking about how much better it would be if *he* could have all the money to himself. Sad to say, this young man soon thought of a plan to poison his companions.

He came to the town, went to the chemist and said, "Sell me some poison if you will, I've got trouble with rats, and a polecat, too. I need to get rid of them all – their attacking all my chickens."

The chemist replied that he had a poison. It was so strong that just taking a tiny amount – the size of a grain of wheat – would kill any living thing straight away.

The young man grabbed the box of poison and ran into a neighbouring street. There he found a man who would lend him three large bottles. He poured the poison into two of them, and kept the third separate for himself. He filled them all with wine, and sauntered back to join the other two.

Well, there's no need to make a long story of it. The other two fell on him exactly as they had planned and killed him. When they had done this, the first of them said, "Now, a drink before we get to work and bury the corpse." He reached for the bottle and took a swig, passed it to his companion who did the same.....*and so they both died.*

| |
|--|
| The Portrait of the Pardon-Seller |
|--|

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER

With him there rode a pardon-seller

Of Rouncivale, his freend and compeer,

His friend and companion, from Charing Cross

That straight was comen fro the court of Rome.

Who had just come from the Vatican in Rome.

Ful loude he soong "Com hider, love, to me!"

Loudly he sang, "Come here, my love, to me!"

The Somonour bar to him a stif burdoun;

The Summoner sang the bass line very loudly;

Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.

No trumpet ever made half so much noise.

The Pardoner hadde heer as yellow as wex,

The Pardon-seller had hair as yellow as wax,

But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;

It hung down sleekly like a hank of flax;

By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,

The hair that he had hung in clumps

And therwith he his shuldres overspradde;

And he spread a few strands of it across his shoulders;

But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon.

But it lay thinly, in rat's tails one by one.

But hood, for jolitee, wered he noon,

Because he wanted to look good, he wore no hood,

For it was trussed up in his walet.

He had it packed away in his bag.

Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;

He thought his appearance matched the latest fashions

Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.

Riding with his hair loose, wearing simply his cap.

Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he an an hare.

His eyes were big and bulging, like a hare.

A voys he hadde as small as hath a goot.

His voice was thin, like a goat's.

No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have;

He had no beard, and never would;

As smothe it was as it were late shave.

His face was as smooth as if it had just been shaved.

I trowe he was a gelding or a mare.

I took him to be a gelding, or a mare.

But of his craft, fro Berwick unto Ware

However, in his trade, From Berwick to Ware

Ne was ther swich another pardoner.

There was nowhere such another pardon-seller

For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,

For in his bag he had a pillowcase

Which that he seyde was Oure Lady veyl;

Which he said was the veil of Our Lady

He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl

He said he had a piece of the sail

That Seint Peter hadde, whan that he wente

St. Peter had, when he walked

Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist him hente.

On the sea, and Jesus caught hold of him.

He hadde a croys of latoun ful of stones,

He had a cheap brass cross set with stones

And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.

And pigs' bones in a glass container.

But with thise relikes, whan that he fond

But with these relics, when he came across

A povre person dwellynge upon lond,

Some poor parson living in the country,

Upon a day he gat hym more moneye

In just one day he'd make more money

Than that the person gat in monthes tweye;

Than the parson would earn in two months;

And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,

And so, with double-talk and tricks,

He made the person and the peple his apes.

He made the parson and the people his fools.

But trewely to tellen ate laste,

But to speak the truth at last,

He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.

He was a splendid churchman.

| |
|---|
| <h2 style="text-align: center;">The Portrait of the Monk</h2> |
|---|

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrie,

There was a monk, the finest he was,

An outridere, that lovede venerie,

Who was the steward of his monastery, and loved hunting.

A manly man, to been an abbot able.

He was a manly man, fit to be an abbot.

Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,

He had many good horses in his stable,

And whan he rood, men mighte his bridel here

When he went out riding, you could hear his bridle

Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere

Jingling in the whistling wind as clearly

As eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle

And as loudly as the monastery chapel bell

Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle.

He was keeper of part of the monastery.

The reule of Seint Maure or of Seint Beneit –

As for the rule of St. Maurus or St Benedict

By cause that it was old and somdel streit

Because it was old and a bit strict

This ilke Monk leet old thynges pace,

This same Monk let the old things slide

And heeld after the newe world the space.

And believed in the modern way of doing things.

He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,

He didn't give so much as a plucked hen

That seith that hunters ben nat hooly men,

For people saying that hunters are not holy men,

Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees,

Or that a monk who doesn't follow his Rule

Is likened to a fish that is waterlees –

Is like a fish out of water,

This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.

That's to say, a monk out of his cloister.

But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oyster;

He didn't think that saying was worth an oyster.

And I seyde his opinion was good.

And I remarked that his opinion was sound.

What sholde he studie and make hymselfen wood,

Why should he study and send himself round the bend

Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,

By poring over some book in the cloister,

Or swynken with his handes, and laboure,

Or work with his hands, and labour,

As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served?

As Augustine bids? How shall the world go on?

Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved!

Augustine can keep his labour!

Therefore he was a prikasour aright:

So he rode hard – no doubt about that -

Greyhoundes he hadde as swift as fowel in flight;

He had greyhounds as swift as birds in flight;

Of prikyng and of hunting for the hare

Hard riding, and the hunting of the hare

Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.

Was what he loved, and was happy to pay for.

I seigh his sleves purfiled at the hond

I noticed his sleeves were trimmed

With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;

With the finest squirrel fur in the land;

And for to festne his hood under his chyn,

And for fastening his hood under his chin

He hadde of gold ywroght a ful curious pyn;

He had an elaborate gold pin;

A love-knotte in the greter end ther was.

At the bigger end it was woven into a love-knot.

His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,

His head was bald, and shone like glass

And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt.

Just as his face was, as if had been anointed.

He was a lord ful fat and in good point;

He was a very fat lord, in prime condition;

His eyen stepe, and rollynge in his heed,

His rolling eyes were set deep in his head,

That stemed as a forneys of a leed;

Sparkling like the fire beneath a pot.

His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.

His boots were of soft leather, and his horse was in perfect trim.

Now certainly he was a fair prelaat;

There was no question – he was a fine prelate!

He was nat pale as a forpyned goost.

He wasn't pale like some tormented spirit

A fat swan loved he best of any roost.

A fat roast swan was what he loved the best.

His palfrey was as broun as a berye.

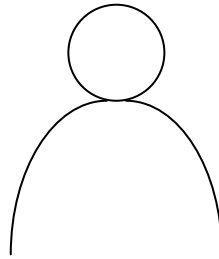
His saddle-horse was brown as any berry.

Notes:

Monks took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They followed the Rule of St. Benedict, which gave guidance for living a simple life, working and praying hard for the praise of God. By Chaucer's time, some of the monasteries had become very rich, and the life of the monks became rather easier than St Benedict had intended!

| |
|-------------------------------------|
| Draw and Label the Pardoner! |
|-------------------------------------|

On your sheet of paper draw a head and shoulders like this:



Then cut out these labels to stick onto your drawing.

| | |
|--|--|
| A voys he hadde as small as hath a goot. <i>His voice was thin, like a goat's.</i> | And therwith he his shuldres overspradde; <i>And he spread a few strands of it across his shoulders;</i> |
| His heer was yellow as wex <i>His hair was yellow as wax</i> | By ounces henge his lokkes <i>The hair that he had hung in clumps</i> |
| glarynge eyen <i>big and bulging eyes</i> | No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have <i>He had no beard, and never would</i> |

The Chaucer Times

Research project

1. Request a topic box from your Library service – Medieval Life and Times, especially the Black Death.
2. See what your own library has as well.
3. Group students into small groups or pairs to find material.
4. They should look for:
 - a. When and where the Black Death happened
 - b. What happened to people who caught it
 - c. Why people thought it happened
 - d. How people thought it could be cured or prevented
 - e. How it was really caught
 - f. If everybody who got it died
 - g. Examples of medieval costume (for picture work)
5. They should note information down as they find it, making photocopies if possible of most useful bits.
6. Explain that they are going each to create a front page, making use of the information they have found out.
7. Low-tech option: issue a template as a photocopy, and get students to rule up their own sheets of plain A4
8. Hi-tech option: get computer technician to put the template on the network in the English folder. Students can then copy it to their own areas, and then begin to write their own pages.